REPORT Global Politics

Half-Truths and Consequences: The Legacy of 'Global 2000'

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HALF - TRUTHS AND CONSEQUENCES: THE. LEGACY OF GLOBAL 2000

INTRODUCTION

It was not quite a modern Chicken Little proclaiming the sky was falling, but the Global 2000 Report was full of doom and gloom.' Issued in 1980, with the Carter Administration's enthusi- astic blessing, the pessimistic report projected a future plagued by shortages of the globe's most basic and essential resources. Although Global 2000's findings and methods by now have been refuted, the report continues to influence public policy. Even after four years of the Reagan Administration philosophy that government involvement tends "to restrict the availability of resources rather than assist it," federal officials and members of Congress too often prescribe policies based on premises derived from the Global 2000 Report.

A dramatic example is the 1981 Farm Bill. One of Congress's worst recent blunders, the bill established inflexible price supports years in advance of anticipated steady increases in world food prices. According to University of Chicago agricultural economist Gale Johnson, Global 2000's prediction that food prices would rise by 5 percent annually between 1970 and the year 2000 contributed to the bill's passage by reinforcing that belief within Congress.2 of course, this prediction proved to be dead wrong--the real price of food has declined since 1970. The result of this policy has been costly overproduction and precipi- tous declines in foreign sales of U.S. farm products since 1982. Not only farmers have suffered: the payment-in-kind and other resulting acreage reduction programs cost U.S. taxpayers more

Global 2000 Report to the President, Vols. I, II, and III (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Governmexit Printing Office, 1980). 2 Conversation with Gale Johnson, October 1984. than the entire net income of U.S. farmers in that year.3 In short, the 1981 policy has been a disaster.

Examples abound of Global 2000's influence on policy. The direction and magnitude of U.S. THernational assistance, for instance, has been particularly affected by the report's recommen- dations. It is time, therefore, that an Administration based on optimism and confidence in growth ensure that Global 2000's discredited projections are prevented from fur@er =nfΓuencing policy formation.

GLOBAL 2000--BACKGROUND

overly pessimistic forecasts are typically justified on the basis of the socially useful reforms they allegedly generate. But this philosophy ignores that misinformation tends to beget misinformation. Warned Phillip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences, fifteen years ago at the advent of the environmental movement: "The nations of the world may yet pay a dreadful price for the public behavior of scientists who depart from ... fact to indulge in hyperbole.114 Indeed, there is no surer road to deprivation than to devote resources to illusory crises. As the Farm Bill example illustrates, inaccurate forecasts can lead to costly, misdirected policies. Rarely, however, are the consequences of flawed forecasts measured or even brought to the public's attention at all.

Assessing the role of any single report or event on policy formation is tricky. Seldom can a piece of legislation be traced to one or even a few specific causes. Numerous factors are usually at play, intertwined and subtly influencing the ultimate decisions of policy makers. Moreover, ideas can take years to evolve fully into political consequences. As such, much of Global 2000's effect has not yet been felt.

Global 2000 was a $1 million study by the State Department, the Council on Environmental Quality, and eleven other participat- ing federal agencies. It attempted to project international trends in population, pollution, and resource availability through the year 2000. The global outlook painted by the report was extremely bleak. Its opening sentence reads:

If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to environmental disruption than the world we live in now .... Despite greater material output, the world's people will be poorer in many ways than they are today.

United Press International, Release, April 28,' 1984. 4 Rene Dubos, "Half-Truths about the Future," Wall Street Journal, May 8, 1981. Eight years earlier the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth had predicted that the world faced mass starvati-on, resource depletion of gigantic proportions, and other environmental degradation. The widely publicized writings of authors such as Paul Ehrlich, Barry Commoner, and Lester Brown year after year have warned that planet Earth is teetering on the brink of ecological disaster.

One'factor, however, made Global 2000 vastly more influ- ential than the writings of previous prophets of doom: It was the official position of the U.S. government. Stated Philip Shabecoff, environmental reporter for the New York Times, in explaining the widespread attention afford7ed -Global 2000: "The State Department is not prone to releasing filiv-olous documents-"

Immediately after the 1980 presidential elections, the lame duck Carter Administration drafted a sequel to Global 2000 entitled Global Future: Time to -Act--a series of recommendations urging increased government involvement on environmental issues to avert the precarious future promised by Global 2000.5 Many of Time to Act's recommendations have been iidp-lemented with little rio@tice Turing the past four years.

The scientific and academic communities greeted Global 2000 critically.6 It was found, for instance, that the report's own data often failed to support its scary predictions. In other instances the data had been superseded by more recent figures, which refuted the report's conclusions. Strongly challenged was Global 2000's assumption of "no change in policy"--a static vision of-t-he future that neglects to consider human responses to changing conditions. Experts emphasized the unrealistic nature of such an assumption--analogous to projecting that a man standing on railroad tracks would be hit by an approaching train "if present trends continue," as if the man would not have the sense to jump off the track. To the late Herman Kahn, Global 2000 was "Globaloney.11

Perhaps the most comprehensive refutation of Global 2000 is The Resourceful Earth, edited bT Julian Simon and Herman Kahn, and released eaFl-"l-er this year. This book concludes that, although serious environmental threats exist, the prospects look good for a prosperous and healthy world in the year 2000--provided that government avoids Global 2000's prescriptions.

5 Global Future: Time to Act (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing 6 Office, January 1981). Dubos, op. cit.; Herman Kahn and Ernest Schneider, "Globaloney 2000," Policy Review, Spring 1981; Julian L. Simon, "Global Confusion, 1980: A 7 Hard Look at the Global 2000 Report," The Public Interest, Winter 1981. Julian L. Simon and Herman Kahn, The Resourceful Earth (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1984). GLOBAL 2000 AND THE MEDIA

The time: the year 2000. The place: Earth, a desolate planet slowly dying of its own accumulating follies. Half of the forests are gone; sand dunes spread where fertile farm lands once lay. Nearly 2 million species of plants, birds, insects and animals have vanished. Yet.man is propagating so fast that his cities have grown as large as his nations of a century before. The bleak scenario is not science fiction, but a detailed look at the real world's future: "Global 2000.11

This is how Newsweeks reported on Global 2000 at the time of its release. The press has brought the report's frightening forecasts into the public's living rooms. Journalists understand- ably have treated Global-2000 with the reverence an 800-page government document comprl-ed by thirteen federal agencies commands. Nearly every news magazine and newspaper in the nation carried stories similar to Newsweek's. Overwhelmingly the press praised the report as a much needea call for remedial policy. In fact-- and this is critical--had Global 2000 received no further atten- tion than what it received,-in 'the first month of its release, its misleading forecasts still would qualify as a major force in molding the public's concern over the issues it addressed. But Global 2000 continues to be quoted frequently by the press, often as the definitive statement on resource, population, and environ- mental issues. It is not unusual, for example, to find articles on the U.S. soil erosion "disaster" advocating adoption of the recommendations of Time to Act, as the Christian Science Monitor did in late 1982.9

GLOBAL 20001S IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Global 2000's most important, and probably least recognized, impact has been in strengthening the environmental lobby in Washington by lending credence to previously unsubstantiated assertions. The growth of environmental groups concurrent with the release of Global 2000 is well documented.10. Total annual budgets for eight of the largest environmental groups exceeds $94 million, while the member organizations of the Global Tomorrow Coalition represent a constituency of six million. Since Global 2000 released its chilling forecasts, the Sierra Club has doubled 1-ts membership while the National Audubon Society has grown almost 60 percent."

8 "A Grim Year 2000," Newsweek, August 4, 1980, p. 38. 9 "Save the Soil," The Christian Science Monitor, September 22, 1982, p. 24. 10 For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Joyce M. Wood, "Trends in Environmental Advocacy," in An Analysis of Trends Impacting NOAA in the Next Decade, Fall 1983; or William Symonds, "Washington in the Grip of the Green Giant," Fortune, October 4, 1982. 11 Wood, op. cit., pp. 3-4. Observed George Washington University political scientist Robert Lichter, Global 2000 "legitimized" the environmentalists' previously scieri7t'ifically undocumented warnings. What had once been discarded as mere supposition now appeared in the headlines of every newpaper in the country. Futures consultant Joe Coates called Global 2000 a "public relations tour-de-force.11 To confirm this reqUi@res but a glance at the pages of the fund-raising letters.and publications of environmental groups--where Global 2000's findings are astonishingly endemic.

Global 2000, moreover, has been a catalyst in consolidating the interests of environmental groups that had heretofore worked independently. Admits Fran Lipscomb of the National Audubon Society: "Global 2000 instilled the notion that we (environmental groups] need to look at all the issues interdependently."

GLOBAL 20001S-IMPACT WITHIN FEDERAL AGENCIES

Global 2000's direct influence on Reagan Administration policy has beeiFlimited by several factors:

1) It was suspect because it was regarded as a Carter initiative.

2) Many of Global 2000's short-term projections had been disputed by observable events only a year or so after its release. For example, Global 2000 predicted that by the year 2000 U.S. energy consumption would be 160 quadrillion BTU, or twice the 1980 level. only about a year after this projection was made, both the Commerce and Energy Departments estimated consumption levels for 2000 at between 90 and 97 quads.12

3) Agency officials are far more likely to turn to original sources or to scientific publications than to Global 2000.13

Though the report's direct influence has been limited, the indirect influence has been substantial. Says Dan Tunstall of The World Resources Institute: "Within government the projections have not been ignored. People in government under the Reagan Administration may criticize it, but they are more sensitive to the issues because of it.1114

A 1982 interagency survey, moreover, revealed that the majority of the bureaucrats surveyed adhere to the Global 2000 perspective on resources and population. The survey reached these disturbing conclusions:

12 "Facts and Credibility," Oil and Gas Journal, October 11, 1982, p. 62. 13 Letter, Thomas J. Maginnis, Office of Policy- and Planning, NOAA, October 22, 1984. 14 Conversation with Dan Tunstall, September 1984. 1) Resources continue to be viewed in a static fashion without consideration of price, substitution, or alternatives.

2) Most everyone thinks that more people is a problem.

3) Except for NASA and EPA, there is little knowledge or anticipation of emerging technology.

4) There was an overall tendency to reaffirm Global 2000 and some speculation that Global 2000 was too Fp-`t1MiStiC.15

The limits to growth view--reinforced by Global 2000--thus pervades the federal agencies. This can have considerable impact on policy through agency interpretation, and execution, of legisla- tion.

An even more significant impact may be the increasing attempts by federal agencies to project very long-term trends; this is the so-called futures work. one of the most publicized findings of Global 2000 was that federal agencies were incapable of conducting long-range planning. As a direct or indirect response to this criticism, over the past four years the agencies have initiated a flood of costly futures reports looking at trends to the year 2000 and beyond. Examples include the National oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's "Analysis of Trends Impacting N.O.A.A. in the Next Decade," NASA's "Global Habitability Project," and the Department of the Army's "Airland Battle 200011 (now called "Army 2111). While the federal government had made long-run predictions long before Global 2000, there is a direct correlation between the amount of int-erest generated by Global 2000 in fore- sight, and the agencies' stepped-up activiiy-l'-n -long-term trend analysis.

The most noteworthy of Global 2000's influences on the Reagan Administration has been the formation in 1981 of the Global Issues Working Group (GIWG). Much of the group's activity mirrors Global 2000, starting with its original intent: "The working group provides the administration through the Cabinet Council process, with the collective thinking of senior officials able to take policy level responsibility to recommend a propria4-= 1116p te government action on global environmental issues.... Initially the group's task was to refute Global 2000, but it now seems that GIWG merely will issue a report@'stressing the reso 'urce philosophy of the Reagan Administration, along with an updated analysis of the trends projected in Global 2000.

is Global Issues Working Group, Federal Agency Questionnaire Results, no date. 16 Statement of A. Alan Hill, "Global Trends in Population and Regources," Hearings, Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 23, 1982, p. 196. GIWG's creation and activities say much about Global 2000's lingering influence. Dan Tunstall feels that Global 2000 has created a "political mandate" dictating that the Reagan Adminstra- tion take its stab at predicting future trends--an activity which, paradoxically, contradicts Reagan's general philosophy that there is little need for the government to become involved in such activities. A preliminary GIWG draft delineated the Reagan Administration's dilemma and demonstrated that Global 2000 has set a precedent for future reports:

The attacks upon the Administration for ignoring the alleged worldwide catastrophes that will be caused unless new policies are adopted, is sufficiently intense and important that some entry into the public dialogue should be made .... Simply doing nothing would ensure that attacks on theLAdministration as being unconcerned or unable to face the reality of global-catastrophe would correspondingly increase.17

Though nothing substantive is expected to come out of GIWG, by devoting time and resources toward discrediting Global 2000, the Administration has only enhanced its legitimacy.

GLOBAL 20001S INFLUENCE ON LEGISLATION

Within Congress, Global 2000-and its general philosophy of an expanded role for government in resource allocation and manage- ment issues has been embraced enthusiastically. More than 85 Republican and Democratic congressmen sent a letter to Reagan in 1981 urging him to act on the recommendations in Global 2000 and Time to Act.18 Said this letter:

The Global 2000 study has been circulated throughout the world: the recommendations for implementing this broad-scoped and highly significant study provide a workable blueprint for the steps that must be taken if the present inhabitants of this planet are truly con- cerned about the kind of world we will turn over to the next generation.

We strongly urge that you give the Global Future: Time to Act report your thoughtful consi-de-r-a-fl-on and that you put into motion the machinery that will translate these nearly inevitable calamities and chaos that the world will confront as the result of Global overpopula- tion, shortages of vital resources and the devastating deterioration of the world environment.

17 Global Issues Working Group Preliminary Working Draft, 1983, p. 21. Letter Initiated by Senator Charles McC. Mathias, sent June 22, 1981.

Congress has moved on its own in implementing Global 2000. Nearly a dozen hearings, a prerequisite to any legislation, have been held in the past four years discussing how best to reverse the trends "identified" by Global 2000. Four key issues have been most influenced:

Population Policy

Global 2000 predicted a vastly overcrowded world in the year 2000. As such, Time to Act strongly recommended doubling U.S. foreign aid for population control activity. This directive has been enthusiastically embraced by Agency for International Develop- ment Administrator Peter McPherson, who has been described as "a strong advocate of Global 2000.11 In 1981 McPherson went before Congress to request a huge funding increase for population control activity, citing Global 1000 as a primary justification for the request. McPherson testified:

The Global 2000 Report in particular presents a sobering picture of large scale, interrelated problems caused by population growth, energy scarcity, forest destruction with attendant soil and atmospheric effects, and pressure on food production capacity .... Today, demand for popula- tion programs far exceeds available resources. Our funding request of $253.4 million for population programs is essential to keep up the momentum in the highest priority programs.19

In the past three years, AID's budget for population control has steadily risen in accordance with Time to Act's recommendation, despite the Reagan Administration's vow to "tighten restrictions on U.S. aid to population control programs abroad.1120 This past fall AID was granted $290 million--a 65 percent increase for population programs.

HOW large a role has Global 2000 played in these most recent increases in population activity funding? A fairly substantial one. While the Reagan Administration vehemently has opposed the funding, a lobbyist for the American Life Lobby believes that environmental groups' support for stepped-up population-reduction programs has expanded so dramatically on the coattails of attention received by Global 2000 that political considerations have prevent- ed the Reagan Administration from taking a lead role in the fight against these appropriations. Additionally, a source at the State Department concedes that the alarms sounded in studies like Global 2000 and The World Bank Report have aided the passage of these appropriations'.

19 Statement of N. Peter HePherson before the Senate Foreign Relations Commit- tee, April 1, 1981. 20 "Reagan Restrictions on Foreign Aid for Abortion Programs Lead to a Fight," The New York Times, October 14, 1984, p. 20. 21 For a discussion of the imprudence of U.S. population programs, see Julian L..Simon, "Treating People As an Asset," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 367, July 1984. Forestry

It seems that wherever discussions of international defores- tation take place, Global 2000's forestry projections can be found. The report termed tropical deforestation "the most serious environmental problem confronting the globe," and predicted "at the present rate, the developing world will lose up to 40 percent of its forests by the turn of the century." The Christian Science Monitor published a two-page story with this quot from Global 2000 along with a chart from Global 2000--pictorially confirilin-gthe world's shrinking forest-s-77 -And this spring, a Foreign Affairs article on deforestation cited Global 2000 projections twice."

Congress responded in 1981 to the putative international deforestation crisis with an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which mandated that the U.S. grant high priority in interna- tional assistance to reversing tropical deforestation trends. Since then, funding for international forestry activities has risen from $71 million in 1979 just prior to Global 2000 to $124 million in 1983, or a nearly 70 percent increase over four years. Stated Bruce Ross, a widely respected expert on international forestry: "Global 2000 was one of several major reports published around 1980 that had an effect upon U.S. bilateral aid. Bureaucrats at AID who wanted forests treated as a natural resource, were able to successfully use Global 2000 to give weight to their arguments, which then translated into a budget impact--more AID money directed toward forestry planning.,124 Though Global 2000 vastly exaggerated the global deforestation trends, st experts agree that there is a need for better forestry management in regions where deforestation is a problem.25

Species Extinction

Global 2000 has had its most direct impact in the area of species loss. the report warned: "Hundreds of thousands of species--perhaps as many as 20 percent of all species on earth-- will be irretrievably lost as their habitats vanish, especially in tropical forests." Before these frightening projections were released, AID had little interest in preservation of species. Today there is a flourish of activity.

The first government response to Global 2000's warnings on .this issue was the November 1981 "Stra'tegicconference on Biologi- cal Diversity" sponsored by the State Department. A participant

22 "Shrinking Forests," The Christian Science Monitor, January 10, 1984, p. 22. 23 Nicholas Guppy, "Tropical Deforestation: A Global View," Foreign Affairs, Spring 1984, pp. 928-965. 24 Conversation with Bruce Ross, September 1984. 25 Roger A. Sedjo and Marion Clawson, "Global Forests," in Simon and Kahn, op. cit., pp. 128-170.

at the conference recalls that Global 2000's findings were the center of concerri and discussion. Reported the Environmental News Service, the conference was "a virtual sounding board for Global 2000 themes.'"111 This conference was the first important step Zo-ward congressional passage of a 1983 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which mandated a report describing the programs of each of the federal agencies involved in international wild- life resources conservation. The amendment recommended a coordi- nated U.S. program "to assist foreign governments and international organizations in conserving wildlife, taking into account the projections in the Global 2000 study.1127

AID is expected to release the findings of its report later this year; then, typically, the report will advocate budget appropriations to combat the precarious trends it identifies. In the next few years, AID can be expected to start funding species preservation projects, even though reliable data have yet to substantiate the extent to which annual species loss is actually occurring.28

Global Foresight

Global 2000 practically created the issue of global foresight-- whether the fediral government should become involved in long-term trend assessment--as it now is discussed in Congress. Wrote Peters Willson, Vice President of the Global Tomorrow Coalition: "Without the issuance of Global 2000 there would be no discussion of foresight capability on the Hill.,,29 If momentum for foresight legislation has slowed, one reason is that the legislation has been linked to centralized planning--a tag it cannot, or refuses to, shake. In fact, foresight proponents openly acknowledge this. Asserted David Mahoney, chief executive officer of Norton Simon Incorporated, in the Wall Street Journal:

We must coordinate our domestic and international economic policies and plan for the future if we are to compete effectively in the world marketplace. Planning is the watchword of nations competing with us, and it must become a part of our public process as well .... We no longer can afford to rely solel To on the great strengths of our unplanned domestic economy.

26 "State 'Diversity' Conference to Start Anti-Industry Campaign?" Environ- mental News Service, April 1982, p. 4. ZI Public Law 98-154, Section 704, International Environmental Protection, 28 November 22, 1983. Julian Simon and Aaron Wildavsky, "On Species Loss and the Absence of 29 Data," in Simon and Kahn, op. cit., pp. 171-184. 30 Peters Willson, Alan Guttmacher Memo, September 17, 1982. David J. Mahoney, "Beyond the Free Market," The Wall Street Journal, February 7, 1983.

Another obstacle to foresight has been the Year 2000 Commit- tee's report, Corporate Use of Information, which suggests that businesses oppose government involvement in foresight activities, and simply desire more timely and accurate data.31 This finding contradicted foresight advocates' position that business would be a primary beneficiary of federal foresight. Despite this slowed momentum, foresight continues to have champions and new foresight bills are expected in the next session of Congress.

GLOBAL 20001S INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Those who have closely followed Global 2000 concur that its international impact has been immense. Boasted Jimmy Carter in a 1983 address to the Global Tomorrow Coalition: "Since its release, other nations have adopted the report as a basis for shaping their national policies.,,32 Gerald Barney, director of Global 2000, wrote: "The report has been discussed at the veniEe -Summit Uonference, and at professional meetings in Austria, Canada, China, Cuba, England, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, the Soviet Union, among others.1133 (Asked to elaborate on these points for The Heritage Foundation, Barney declined to do so without being paid.34 Barney now makes his living spreading Global 2000's message to countries all over the world.)

When Global 2000 originally was released, the Carter Admini- stration circulatea-713"t to foreign decision makers. Former Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Pickering testified to the extensiveness of this crusade:

The Global 2000 Report and related interpretive infor- mation have now been distributed broadly throughout the world via State Department embassies, A.I.D. Missions, and the International Communications Agency. We pre- sented a special briefing on Global 2000 to the Washing- ton based diplomatic corps as one of our first steps following release of the report; and Secretary (of State] Muskie sent a personal letter to each of our Ambassadors noting the importance of Global 2000 and seeking their involvement in ensuring that the issues are brought to the attention of senior officials in each host country.35

31 Russell E. Train, World Wildlife Fund, Corporate Use of Information Regard- 32 ing Natural Resources and Environmental Quality, 1984, p. 72. "House Votes to Restore EPA Funds to 1981 Level," Washington Post, June 33 3, 1983, p. 1. Gerald 0. Barney, "Global 2000: The Authors Update Their Work," Gerald 34 Barney & Associates, Professional Paper #9, August 1982. 35 Conversation with Gerald 0. Barney, September 1984. Statement of Thomas Pickering in Hearings, Subcommittee on International Economics, Joint Economic Committee, "The Global 2000 Report," September 4, 1980, p. 17. Rarely has the international-press so unanimously praised a U.S. initiative as it has Global 2000.36 Further, the report has been translated into five languagei-(with more translations in progress) and has sold hundreds of thousands of copies overseas. The Italian Senate devoted an entire day of hearings to address the issues raised in Global 2000. The Canadian Association of the Club of Rome issu what amounted to a rewrite of Global 2000 entitled Global 2000: Implications for Canada.

Japan, West Germany, Mexico, China, and other nations have launched their own Global 2000s. Developing countries in Africa have expressed considerable-THterest in assessing resource and population trends. These foreign Global 2000s share one feature: they all promote the "limits to growth" mentality.

The Independent Commission on the Environment

One result of the international attention paid to Global 2000 that may affect U.S. policy has been the proposal to the 'United Nations Environmental Program by Japan to create an Independent commission on the Environment. This multination commission will address global environmental issues highlighted by Global 2000. Transcripts from the Commission's preliminary session indicate its biases:

There is an urgent need to fashion a long-term, inte- grated global strategy for survival on this planet.

Indeed the world is shrinking rapidly.

Widespread poverty and concentrated affluence result in increased depletion of resources and environmental degradation....

Indeed we need to push against the limits of the system of nation states.37

INFLUENCE OF GLOBAL 2000 ON EDUCATION

For years environmentalists have been inserting the limits to growth philosophy into American public schools. some interest groups hold teacher workshops; others, most notably the National Audubon Society, distribute educational "resources" including films, teaching kits, and educational guides. Futurist Herman Kahn recognized that these groups could easily incorporate Global 2000's findings for educational purposes. He observed:

36 Ibide , p. 14. 37 To date, all that has been released has been a discussion at UNEP concerning the formation of the Commission. See: United Nations Environ- ment Program, Intergovernmental Inter-Sessional Preparatory Committee on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, May 30, 1984. ... the real importance of this document lies in its impact upon people who are professionally concerned with environmental issues. In addition to government officials, this includes many college professors and public school teachers who are eager to exploit any respectable material which tends to support their pessimistic attitude toward the U.S. economic and political system. Global 2000 is tailor-made for this kind of exploitation.38

Indeed, Global 2000 is increasingly appearing in the schools. The Zero Population GF5wth lobby has sold or distributed its teaching aid, "Global 2000 Countdown Kit," to more than 1,000 schools. ZPG advertises the kit as:

Consisting of 14 units, each of which addresses a topic covered in the Global 2000 Report, the kit is designed to be used by high school students and facilitated by their instructor .... The final section of each unit, entitled "Making a Difference," suggests how students can affect larger change by becoming involved in commu- nity, school, or family action to do just that.

Even the normally scrupulously unbiased Population Reference Bureau in its popular 1983 teaching guide, "The Environment to Come," cites Global 2000's findings often, along with those of similarly frightening visions of the future.39 Though the Bureau is aware of Global 2000's many inaccuraciesl the organization justifies the presentation of its findings to school children by stating: "It probably is appropriate that the schools pass along the warnings of the 'sentries.' This is the kind of information that must be freely distributed, even if it turns out eventually to be invalid" (emphasis in original)."

As a result of the attention granted to reports like Limits to Growth, educators are failing to provide a balanced vie;W -of population growth and resource availability.41 A Hudson Institute survey of high school students in Arizona found that 69 percent of the students surveyed believe that world population growth is too rapid and that natural resources are running out. The Hudson Institute concluded that these pessimistic views can be attributed to "the broad acceptance" of reports of impending global catastro-

38 Kahn, op. cit., p. 23. 39 Population Reference Bureau, Inc., "The Environment to Come," 1983. 40 Population Reference Bureau, Inc., "A Teacher's Guide to the Global 41 Environment," Interchange, March 1983. See, for instance, Herbert I. London, Why Are They Lying to Our Children? (New York: Hudson Institute: New York, 1984); or Jane Newitt, The Treat- ment of Limits to Growth Issues in U.S. High School Textbooks: Report of a Research Project Conducted for Hudson Institute's "Visions of the Future" Program, February 1983. phe including "the Limits of Growth and the Global 2000 Report.it42 Warned Herman Kahn: "If the idea that more economic growth will pollute the environment and rob the world's poor further infil- trates our school system, we should not be surprised that young people prefer the Sierra Club and Nader's raiders to Exxon and General Motors.1143

THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF GLOBAL 2000

In addition to the groups already mentioned--including the Independent Commission on the Environment and Global Issues Working Group--other Global 2000 offshoots are:

The Global Tomorrow Coalition

Consisting mainly of environmental groups, with some member- ship from the media and the business community, this coalition was launched with two self-proclaimed objectives: to translate Global 2000's findings into government policy and to accelerate the momFn-tum for environmental concern begun in the early 1970s. Though GTC has only a tiny paid staff, its membership has nearly doubled since its founding in 1981; it now represents over six million constituents. And while Global 2000's momentum has slowed somewhat since 1981, GTC has @been instrumental in keeping the movement alive.

World Resources Institute

In 1982 the MacArthur Foundation gave a $15 million grant to Gus Speth, a former head of the Council on Environmental Quality and principal author of Global 2000--to form the World Resources Institute. Global 2000 was the-in-tellectual rationale for WRI; it was formed to "provide a global perspective on resource, population, and environmental issues..1144

So far, the consensus is that WRI has had surprisingly little influence on policy and academic thought. Harvey Alder, Manager of the Resource Policy Office of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, speculates that WRI may amount to "no more than a defense of Global 2000.1145 In fact, one of WRI's major projects is an annual world resources report to improve global resource data collection, which is right in line with a Global 2000 recom- mendation. With a $4 million budget WRI could wield vast future influence.

42 "Teachers Gather to Study Future," New York Times, July 10, 1983, p. 6. 43 Kahn, op. cit., p. 23. 44 Statement of Gus Speth, "Global Trends in Population and Resources," Hearings, Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Senate Committee 45 on Foreign Relations, June 23, 1982, p. 182. Conversation with Harvey Alder, Chamber of Commerce, October 1984.

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Year 2000 Committee

A recently completed three-year project of the World Wildlife Fund sought to persuade Congress to develop a foresight capability. Its membership consisted of such leading liberals as Walter Cronkite, Cyrus Vance, Elliot Richardson, and Robert McNamara. Ironically, the group may have done far more harm than benefit to the federal foresight movement when it concluded from its corporate survey that businesses do not in general favor government involve- ment in foresight.46

Globescope

This recent offshoot of the Global Tomorrow Coalition was created to "increase public understanding of the challenges posed by long-term global trenils.11 The group hopes.to act as a nation- wide network for community-based environmental groups and plans its first national conference for next year.

Council on Foundations

This philanthropic coalition, established to expand U.S. foreign assistance, was formed in part as a response to Global 2000's charges of vast environmental degradation. The New York Times reported that the group was galvanized, among other reasons, to get "more attention paid to the gloomy forecasts of population pressures on depleting resources that had been underscored in the recently issued Global 2000 Report.1147 The Council had revenues of nearly $3 million in 1983.48

CONCLUSION

Though Global 2000 has been recognized as a severely flawed piece of science, it nonetheless has had wide-ranging consequences. Among the most serious:

1) The Report has boosted U.S. funding for a number of foreign assistance activities including population control, tropical deforestation, and species extinction.

2) The report has helped inject the limits to growth philo- sophy in the nation's schools.

3) The report has stimulated creation of organizations determined to address the problem of shrinking world resources.

46 Train, op. cit., p. 72. 47 "Philanthropic Coalition to Expand Aid Abroad," The New York Times, January 31, 1982, p. 30. 48 Council on Foundations, Annual Report, Washington, D.C., 1983. 4) The report has created the issue of global foresight and has promoted a trend toward more futures work within the federal agencies.

5) The report has legitimized the arguments of environmental interest groups, and by so doing, has significantly increased their influence and constituency.

Global 2000 is a case study in the abuse of planning and forecasting as icience. To assure immediate, dramatic impact on the course of policy making, alarmists project long-term dire consequences on the basis of apparent trends in short-term data. Typically, the impact of technologica'1 change and human ingenuity is ignored. The Reagan Administration and leaders in Congress should ensure that Global 2000's flawed premises and inaccurate forecasts do not become the basis for future federal policy.

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Distinguished Fellow in Economics